



STATE OF ARKANSAS

Department of Veterans Affairs
2200 Fort Roots Drive, Bldg. 65, Rm. 119
North Little Rock, Arkansas 72114-1756
(501) 370-3820 / FAX (501) 370-3829

Mike Beebe
Governor

Alicia (Cissy) Rucker
Director

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North Little Rock, Fort Roots Site Selected for New State Veterans Home

NORTH LITTLE ROCK, AR — After a thorough and lengthy review of more than 30 proposed locations, The Director of the Arkansas Department of Veterans Affairs selected Fort Roots, North Little Rock, Arkansas as the site for a new State Veterans Home.

Act 165 of the 89th Arkansas General Assembly provided “The Arkansas Department of Veterans Affairs (ADVA) authority to establish and maintain a Veterans’ Home at a location selected by the ADVA Director after seeking advice from the Arkansas Veterans’ Commission and the Arkansas Veterans’ Home Task Force.”

“This was a difficult selection process, as many communities submitted worthy sites for the new Veterans’ home,” said Governor Mike Beebe. “Director Rucker and her team worked diligently and fairly through this process, and I’m confident that their selection of North Little Rock will provide the setting and care our Veterans deserve.”

The Task Force met monthly from May 2013 until October 2013. While much valuable information and advice was passed from members and potential site representatives, a unanimous site recommendation was not made.

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The Commission reviewed a second, more detailed round of proposals. After a December 2013 meeting, they visited four sites (Searcy, two in Jacksonville and Fort Roots). During its January meeting, the Fort Roots, North Little Rock, site was recommended.

Additional input was solicited from Veteran Service Organizations through Task Force and Arkansas Veterans Coalition representatives.

The Fort Roots site was selected based on the following key project drivers:

- Access to a workforce estimated at more than 200,000.
- Immediate access to VA Health facilities. Eugene Towbin Veterans Healthcare Center, directly across the street, and John L. McClellan Memorial Veterans Hospital, 7 miles.
- Access to Vets Center, 3 miles.
- Accessibility to the largest Veteran population within the state.
- Availability of approximately 34 acres.
- Prior use was a military post and golf course.
- Veteran friendly environment.
- Utility infrastructure onsite.
- Located only 9 miles away, this location will serve as a replacement for the former Arkansas Veterans Home in Little Rock that closed in November 2012 because of disrepair.

In addition to these key drivers, this central location provides the following:

- Nearby access to I-40, I-30, I-430, I-530 and Highway 67/167.
- Accessible public transportation as well as DAV vans and VA Shuttle service.

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- Nearby amenities are far too numerous to name but include shopping, restaurants, lodging and recreational facilities.
- ISO-2 fire service 1.6 miles at North Little Rock and onsite at Fort Roots.
- Main North Little Rock Police Department less than 10 minutes and onsite security forces at Fort Roots and the adjacent Pulaski Technical College.
- Additional healthcare available nearby at Baptist Springhill Hospital, Baptist Medical Center, St. Vincent Rehab Hospital, St. Vincent Infirmary and numerous private clinics.

The site must be transferred from VA ownership to ADVA. There is no immediate timeline on this requirement; it will be made as the project moves along.

While many proposals were excellent and could easily be chosen for additional Veteran Homes in years to come, the site at Fort Roots, North Little Rock, was determined to be the best for Arkansas Veterans.

Stanley, Polk, Wilcox Architects was selected as the design team and work is in progress designing the structure. Bidding for the contractor will open later this year.

“We are excited about this project as the central Arkansas location will give access to the largest number of Veterans and families within the state,” said ADVA Director Cissy Rucker. “Plans for the design have started using input we received during the past year.”

Verification of Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) construction grant funding was received Monday, March 3.

For more information, contact ADVA public affairs officer Kelly Ferguson at (501) 244-1119 or by email at kelly.ferguson@arkansas.gov.

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